

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT: PROPOSED NOISE ELEMENT POLICY 4B

Policy 4b

Because exterior community noise equivalent levels (CNEL) above 60 decibels and/or interior CNEL above 45 decibels may have an adverse effect on public health and welfare, it is the policy of the County of San Diego that:

1. Whenever it appears that new *development* may result in any (existing or future) *noise sensitive land use* being subject to noise levels of CNEL equal to 60 *decibels (A)* or greater, an acoustical analysis shall be required.
2. If the acoustical analysis shows that noise levels at any *noise sensitive land use* will exceed CNEL equal to 60 decibels, modifications shall be made to the *development* which reduce the *exterior noise* level to less than CNEL of 60 *decibels (A)* and the *interior noise* level to less than CNEL of 45 *decibels (A)*.
3. If modifications are not made to the *development* in accordance with paragraph 2 above, the *development* shall not be approved unless a finding is made that there are specifically identified overriding social or economic considerations which warrant approval of the development without such modification; provided, however, if the acoustical study shows that sound levels for any noise sensitive land use will exceed a CNEL equal to 75 *decibels (A)* even with such modifications, the *development* shall not be approved irrespective of such social or economic considerations.

Definitions, Notes & Exceptions

"*Decibels (A)*" refers to A-weighted sound levels as noted on page VIII-2 of this Element.

"*Development*" means any physical development including but not limited to residences, commercial, or industrial facilities, roads, civic buildings, hospitals, schools, airports, or similar facilities.

"*Exterior noise*":

(a) For single-family detached dwelling projects, "exterior noise" means noise measured at an outdoor living area which adjoins and is on the same lot as the dwelling, and which contains at least the following minimum area:

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| (i) Net lot area up to 4,000 sq. ft.: | 400 square feet |
| (ii) Net lot area 4,000 sq. ft. to 10 ac.: | 10% of net lot area |
| (iii) Net lot area over 10 ac.: | 1 ac. |

(b) For all other projects, "exterior noise" means noise measured at all exterior areas which are provided for *group or private usable open space* purposes.

(c) For County road construction projects, the exterior noise level due to vehicular traffic impacting a noise sensitive area should not exceed the following values:

- (i) Federally funded projects: The Noise standard contained in applicable Federal Highway Administration Standards.
- (ii) Other projects: 60 *decibels (A)*, except if the existing or projected noise level without the project is 58 *decibels (A)* or greater, a 3 *decibel (A)* increase is allowed, up to the maximum permitted by Federal Highway Administration Standards.

"*Group or Private Usable Open Space*" shall mean: Usable open space intended for common use by occupants of a *development*, either privately owned and maintained or dedicated to a public agency, normally including swimming pools, recreation courts, patios, open landscaped areas, and greenbelts with pedestrian walkways and equestrian and bicycle trails, but not including off-street parking and loading areas or driveways (Group Usable Open Space); and usable open space intended for use of occupants of one dwelling unit, normally including yards, decks and balconies (Private Usable Open Space).

"*Interior noise*": The following exception shall apply: For rooms which are usually occupied only a part of the day (schools, libraries, or similar), the interior one-hour average sound level, due to noise outside, should not exceed 50 *decibels (A)*.

"*Noise sensitive land use*" means any residence, hospital, school, hotel, resort, library or any other facility where quiet is an important attribute of the environment.

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